

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:RACHRISTENSEN:LM
APPROVED BY EUR: JOHN A. ARMITAGE
H - PSTANGE

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R 120054Z AUG 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 199904

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EEWT, PFOR, RO

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON TRADE AGREEMENT;
ARMITAGE/NICHOLAE M. NICHOLAE CONVERSATION

1. THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED ON AUGUST 6 THAT IT WILL HOLD HEARINGS ON THE EXTENSION OF THE ROMANIAN WAIVER ON SEPTEMBER 8. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN WILL TESTIFY FOR DEPARTMENT. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARIES JENKINS AND ARMITAGE, AS WELL AS OTHER DEPARTMENT STAFF, ARE SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH STAFF AND INTERESTED MEMBERS OF TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE ON AUGUST 24 FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSION OF EXTENSION. FOLLOWING THIS INFORMAL SESSION A DECISION WILL BE MADE WHETHER A PUBLIC HEARING IN THE HOUSE WILL BE CONDUCTED.

2. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE ON AUGUST 9 CALLED IN AMBASSADOR NICHOLAE TO ADVISE HIM OF SCHEDULED HEARING AND INFORMAL DISCUSSION AND TO REVIEW IMMIGRATION
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SITUATION. HE STATED HIS HOPE THAT NICHOLAE WOULD INFORM

THE GOR OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS.

3. ARMITAGE STATED THAT WE DO NOT WANT TO GET INTO THE NUMBERS GAME ON THE IMMIGRATION QUESTION. WE WILL WANT TO TAKE THE POSITION THAT--AS SECRETARY ANDREI SAID--NO ONE WILL BE FORCED TO LEAVE ROMANIA BUT NO ONE WILL BE FORCED TO REMAIN. WE HOPE THE FLOW OF IMMIGRATION WILL CONTINUE AT A REASONABLE PACE. CONGRESS WILL BE INTERESTED IN THE RECENT DEVELOPMENT ON IMMIGRATION AND WILL WANT SOME INDICATION THAT THE CURRENT FLOW WILL BE CONTINUING IN THE FUTURE. WE MAY THEREFORE BE ASKED HOW PASSPORT ISSUANCES ARE COMING.

4. NICOLAE STATED THAT HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE HEARINGS WERE TAKING PLACE. HE REFERRED TO A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH MILTON ROSENTHAL, CHAIRMAN OF THE US-ROMANIAN ECONOMIC COUNCIL, WHO HAD URGED HIM NOT TO INSIST ON HEARINGS. ARMITAGE RESPONDED THAT THE DECISION OF COURSE IS FOR CONGRESS RATHER THAN THE ADMINISTRATION TO MAKE. HE NOTED THAT WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, IT MAY BE BETTER TO HAVE CONGRESS ON RECORD IN FAVOR OF THE EXTENSION RATHER THAN TO HAVE THE EXTENSION TAKE PLACE AS A RESULT OF CONGRESSIONAL INACTION. IF CONGRESS DOES NOTHING, THE APPEARANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL INDIFFERENCE WOULD NOT BE GOOD FOR THE GENERAL SITUATION. WE BELIEVE THE EXTENSION WILL MAKE IT THROUGH CONGRESS IF A REASONABLE PRESENTATION IS POSSIBLE.

5. NICOLAE TURNED TO ROMANIAN PERFORMANCE ON IMMIGRATION DURING THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF AND NOTED THE GREATLY IMPROVED RECORD SINCE MID 1975 IN COMPARISON TO THE FIRST HALF OF 1975. NICOLAE ASSERTED THAT THE CHANGE IN NUMBERS WAS NOT CONNECTED WITH MFN--HE DENIED A LINK BETWEEN ROMANIAN EMIGRATION POLICY AND MFN--BUT WITH AN INCREASE IN THE DEMAND FOR PASSPORTS. HE RECALLED THAT ANDREI HAD EXPLAINED ROMANIAN POLICY IS NOT CONNECTED WITH MFN; IF IT HAD BEEN CONNECTED WITH MFN, INCREASES IN THE NUMBERS WOULD HAVE BEEN SLOWER. ARMITAGE ACKNOWLEDGED THE IMPROVEMENT WHICH NICOLAE MENTIONED. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE CONGRESS WILL PICK ITS OWN

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BASE PERIODS. IF WE COMPARE IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL IN THE AUGUST '74-'75 VS. THE SIMILAR PERIOD '75-'76, THE FIGURES SHOW LITTLE CHANGE. HE ASSERTED THAT CONGRESS IS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN THIS HUMANITARIAN ISSUE. THERE WILL BE QUESTIONS IF THE RATE OF IMMIGRATION FALLS OFF DURING THE PERIOD OF CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OR IF IT APPEARS THAT IT WILL FALL OFF FOLLOWING SUCH CONSIDERATION. ARMITAGE EMPHASIZED THE SUBJECT OF

MARRIAGE CASES AND NOTED THAT, ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN

A NUMBER OF RECENT APPROVALS, THERE IS STILL A SMALL NUMBER OF CASES PENDING. HE HOPED NICOLAE WOULD CALL THIS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GOR. NICOLAE ASKED FOR A LIST OF ANY PRESSING PENDING MARRIAGE APPROVAL CASES.

6. NICOLAE THEN TURNED TO THE ISSUE OF HUNGARIAN MINORITY IN ROMANIA AND STATED THAT HE WAS AFRAID OF THIS ISSUE BEING RAISED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WAIVER EXTENSION HEARINGS. HE STATED THAT THIS IS NOT A HUMANITARIAN ISSUE. IT IS NOT CONNECTED WITH SECTION 402 OF THE TRADE ACT. IT CONCERNS ROMANIAN INTERNAL POLICY AND ITS RELATIONS WITH HUNGARY. ARMITAGE INDICATED THAT NO ONE HAD RAISED WITH US OR CONGRESS THE POLITICAL QUESTION OF TRANSYLVANIA. OUR POSITION ON THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF ROMANIA IS CLEAR AND UNQUESTIONED. WE DON'T EXPECT THAT THIS QUESTION WILL BE RAISED DURING HEARINGS, BUT IF IT IS, OUR POSITION WILL BE THAT THIS IS A MATTER OF THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ROMANIA. WE HAVE INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION WHICH WE WOULD SHARE WITH CONGRESS. HE NOTED THAT THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS TOLD AMBASSADOR BARNES THAT ALTHOUGH THIS IS AN INTERNAL MATTER, THE GOR IS ABLE TO SUPPLY U.S. WITH INFORMATION. NICOLAE STATED HIS UNEASE WITH THE FACT THAT WE COULD NOT CONTROL THE DIRECTION OF QUESTIONING ON THIS ISSUE. ARMITAGE SAID THAT QUESTIONING COULD NOT BE CONTROLLED, BUT WE WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE IN OUR ANSWERS. COUNSELLOR IONITA, WHO ACCOMPANIED NICOLAE, NOTED REFERENCES TO THE PEACE TREATY OF 1947 IN CERTAIN CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN INTRODUCED. HE WONDERED WHETHER SOME OF THESE MIGHT NOT BE APPROVED. CONFIDENTIAL

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ARMITAGE STATED THAT THERE WAS ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY THAT THEY COULD BE APPROVED, BUT WE DOUBTED SUCH RESOLUTIONS WOULD REACH THE FLOOR OF CONGRESS.

7. SENATOR BUCKLEY ON AUGUST 5 INTRODUCED A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A REVIEW AND REPORT BY THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE ROMANIAN MINORITY SITUATION BEFORE CONSIDERATION OF THE WAIVER EXTENSION. CONGRESSMAN KOCH ON AUGUST 9 CALLED ON WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 3. HE INSERTED IN CONGRESSIONAL RECORD DATA ON IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL AS WELL AS REFUTATION OF DEPARTMENT'S PAPER ON STATUS OF HUNGARIAN MINORITY BY COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN ROMANIA AND CALLED FOR CONSIDERATION OF THIS ISSUE ALSO. KISSINGER

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